

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
February 11, 2005

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: **GRANTVILLE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**
Consideration and possible action on the City of San Diego's proposed Grantville Redevelopment Project. Tracy Reed (Community and Economic Development, City of San Diego) will provide an overview of the City's proposed Grantville Redevelopment Project, much of which surrounds the San Diego River (as it flows approximately parallel to Mission Gorge Road). (*Tracy Reed*)

PURPOSE: Inform the Board and provide an opportunity for Board members to comment on the proposed Grantville Redevelopment Project, its impacts on the San Diego River, and how the plan coordinates and conflicts with the City of San Diego's River Park Master Plan.

DISCUSSION: **Should Grantville be Designated as a Redevelopment Area?**
This is the only question currently on the table. The proposed "Project" is strictly the *adoption of the Grantville Redevelopment Project Area* by the Redevelopment Agency of City of San Diego. Specific plans or projects have not been formulated at this time (i.e., which buildings/areas will be replaced or redeveloped and what will replace them remains a future question).

Economic Advantage of Redevelopment Area Designation
Designating a locality as a "Redevelopment Area" is advantageous because it creates a new source of revenue that can only be used in the designated Area. In a Redevelopment Area, approximately 65 cents on every dollar of *new property tax money* (i.e., generated due to a rise in property values following redevelopment) must be spent in the Area on redevelopment (i.e., planning, development, re-planning, redesign, clearance, reconstruction, or rehabilitation).

"Significant, Mitigable Impacts"
According to the December 2004 Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the Grantville Redevelopment Project will result in "*significant, mitigable impacts*" to air quality (short-term construction), noise, cultural resources, biological

resources, geology/soils, hazards and hazardous materials, paleontological resources, aesthetics, water quality/hydrology, and public services. The EIR states that implementation of the proposed mitigation measures will reduce these impact to “a level less than significant”.

Significant, Unavoidable Impacts

According to the EIR, the Project will also result in “*significant, unavoidable impacts*” to transportation/circulation and air quality (long-term mobile emissions). Despite mitigation measures, these impacts will remain significant and unavoidable.

Consistency with Draft San Diego River Park Master Plan / Mitigation Opportunities

For those redevelopment impacts that can be mitigated, the Draft EIR states that there appears to be many opportunities to mitigate within the Project Area that would be consistent with the goals of the City’s Draft San Diego River Park Master Plan (Master Plan).

The Master Plan has identified several areas along the River that are recommended for conversion to Open Space uses. Under the proposed Grantville Plan, all new development will occur pursuant to the land use and zoning designations adopted in the applicable Community Plan. This means that many of the areas immediately adjacent to the River that are currently “*used*” as Industrial or Urban/Developed but are “*zoned*” as Open Space, will be redeveloped as Open Space.¹

Other important mitigation opportunities include: acquisition of land and conservation easements; restoration, creation, or conservation of wetlands or riparian habitat; creation of trail, park, and recreation opportunities; urban runoff treatment; improved flood conveyance; daylighting and dechannelizing of Alvarado Creek, and management of invasive species, etc. The Draft EIR contains specific “assurances” that mitigation sites within the Redevelopment Area will be protected from future development.

The Master Plan also identifies three River Park “key sites” located within the Grantville Project Area (1) the confluence of Alvarado Creek and the San Diego River; (2) Admiral Baker Golf Course; and (3) Superior Mine. Key sites represent special areas of opportunity within the River Park (e.g., an area with the potential to accommodate a significant broad natural river

corridor and increased Open Space) and are described in the Master Plan.

Four “alternatives to the project” are presented in the Draft EIR, two of which are found to be “environmentally superior” to the Proposed Grantville Redevelopment Project.

Coordination Between Draft River Park Master Plan and Draft Redevelopment EIR

Conservancy staff met with City Councilmembers Jim Madaffer and Donna Frye on September 28, 2004 to overview the Grantville Redevelopment Project and discuss coordination between Grantville and the River Park Master Plan. Tracy Reed (City Redevelopment Agency) and several other City staff also attended (Ellen Oppenheim, Tom Story, Lisa Gonzalez, Jaymie Bradford, and Jeff Harkness). Previous coordination meetings have also occurred.

At this time, it appears that the two efforts are generally consistent with each other (Note: Redevelopment Plan is still in early pre-project stage). Both the Redevelopment EIR and the River Park Master Plan make multiple references to each other and encourage early coordination and planning. Both indicate common planning recommendations at common locations (e.g., continuous multi-use trail near River at Superior Mine). The Draft EIR states that it is consistent with the San Diego River Park Master Plan in several respects.

The Master Plan describes the proposed Grantville Redevelopment Project as an important “tool” that can provide the fiscal resources necessary to implement the River Park through the “Confluence Reach” (confluence of Alvarado Creek and the San Diego River). Similarly, the Master Plan indicates that the incorporation of the River Park within the 400 acre Superior Mine property offers the Superior Mine owner the potential for increased property value (and hence creates a strong incentive for early cooperative planning with River Park Planners). Superior Mine can operate for another 20 years, but potential redevelopment value may reduce this time frame.

According to the Master Plan, “San Diego River Park planning is within the proposed Grantville Redevelopment Study to ensure compatibility between the two efforts”. “The Redevelopment Study presents an important means of implementing the River Park through the ‘Upper Valley Reach’”. Coordination between

the two presents a potential opportunity for the San Diego River Park to positively influence redevelopment.

Conservancy Comments / Project Schedule

The public comment period for the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report on the proposed Grantville Redevelopment Project has been extended to **February 14, 2005** (in part, to accept the Conservancy's February 11 comments). The overall Project Schedule is attached as Supporting Document 5.

LEGAL CONCERNS: None.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

**SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS:**

Supporting Documents sent under separate cover

1. Draft Environmental Impact Report, December 13, 2004
2. Draft Redevelopment Plan, November 22, 2004
3. Draft Preliminary Report, January 19, 2005
4. Citizens Guide to Redevelopment, 2002

Supporting Documents attached

5. Draft Schedule of Actions
6. Draft Grantville Development Plan Project Objectives
7. Summary Report from Tracy Reed
8. "Grantville is Focus of Redevelopment Effort". San Diego Union Tribune. January 24, 2005

RECOMMENDATION: Provide Comments and Accept Report.

¹ This situation occurred because older, industrial facilities were built prior to the development of City land-use and zoning regulations.